

Robert Stewart to George Washington, September 3, 1763, Letters to Washington and Accompanying Papers. Published by the Society of the Colonial Dames of America. Edited by Stanislaus Murray Hamilton.

FROM CAPTAIN ROBERT STEWART.

PHILADELPHIA Sepr. 3rd. 1763

MY DEAR SIR

I had the extreme pleasure to receive your very Affecte. Favour Covering your 2d. Sett of Bills —

From the Date of my last I was kept in daily expectations of getting leave to go to England, and put off writing to you in hopes I should have been able to have wrote you something decisive with regard to my affairs, but Sir Jeff always found new reasons for my detention, I could not by any means obtain his Liberty, nor did he give me an absolute denial, but kept me in the most painfull suspense, and disagreeable attendance, from the middle of last Jany. till the latter end of last Month, at length when I little expected it he gave me his leave in writing accompanied by a heap of Friendly professions (which I set down for nothing) and as the place where I had suffer'd so much uneasiness had long since become perfectly disagreeable to me I embrac'd the earliest oppy. of getting away, and arriv'd here yesterday to take my Passage in a Ship which I was told would sail in a few days for London but I find that none will sail from hence in less than three weeks, for that place where I still continue determ'd to make a vigorous effort for a Compy. I readily foresee the most insuperable difficulties with which the Peace has obstructed the road to Military preferment But as I think I can rely upon Genl Monckton's Interest and some

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others of distinction and as the necessary Regulations for the due Government of the Conquered Countries will occasion a number of new Appointments both Civil and Military I would fain hope I shall be able to procure something genteel at any rate it is my last resource — should I fail the attempt will indeed be against me but in my situation I think it would be timidity rather than prudence not to make a Trial —

The Engineers Gordon and Basset are here and present their Compliments to you they have both obtain'd leave to go home; Basset acted as aid de Camp in that very fortunate Affair near Bussie Run¹ and extols the firm coolness uns[h]aken intrepidity and vast alacrity of the Highlanders which compos'd that little Army even to a hyperbole — certain it is that nothing could be more fortunate for these Colonies than the hardly to be hop'd for Success of that day, as the very existence of the back Country depended on the safety of that Convoy for ('tis said) that Fort Pitt and consequently all it's dependencies must have fallen for want of Provisions and Ammunition the consequences of which especially to the middle Colonies would have been dreadful beyond description, there may be reasons for neglecting a Post of such vast importance which was the cause of the last war and which has cost Great Britain and Her Colonies so much Blood and Treasure to acquire and maintain and on whose safety the Lives and Properties of so many Thousands of His Majesty's Subjects depended, But Success gives the most alluring gloss even to the most egregious Blunders² —

The noble expedient they have fallen on in Virga. to employ the Militia in order to save Money and perform actual Service would do honor to the most sublime Military genius and I think exceeds even the wise heads of the Assembly here — Some turgid accounts of the mighty Achievements of Ss.³ Parties have already reach'd this place, but his Letters do not make that impression they used to do —

I propose to go into the Country for a few weeks till the Ship gets ready in order to avoid Expences and need not say how happy you would make me by a Line by Post or

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otherwise, In the mean Time I beg my most Respectfull and Affecte. Complemts. to your Lady and Family & ever am with the highest Esteem & most perfect regard

My Dear Colo Your Most Affecte. & Most Obliged hble Servt. ROBERT STEWART

1 Immediately after peace was concluded with France in 1763, there was a general uprising of the western tribes of Indians, who, after capturing nearly all the frontier forts, united in a fierce attack upon Fort Pitt. Captain Ecuyer, in command there, held the fort under an exhausting blockade for over a month. Colonel Bouquet, who was sent to his relief, was attacked by, but overcame, the savages at Bushy Run, within twenty miles of Fort Pitt, near the headwaters of Turtle Creek.

2 "Things being in that situation I received orders to march with the above troops, the only force the General could collect at that time for the relief of this fort [Fort Pitt], which was in great want of provisions, the little flour they had being damaged. "In that pressing danger the provinces refused to give us the least assistance. Having formed a convoy, I marched from Carlisle the 18th. of July with about 460 rank and file, being the remains of the 42d and 77th regiments, many of them convalescents. I left thirty men at Bedford, and as many at Ligonier, where I arrived on the 2d instant. Having no intelligence of the enemy, I determined to leave the waggons at that post, and to proceed with 400 horses, loaded with flour, to be less incumbered in case of an action. "I left Ligonier on the 4th, and on the 5th instant, at 1 o'clock P. M., after marching seventeen miles, we were suddenly attacked by all the savages collected about Fort Pitt. I shall not enter into the detail of that obstinate action, which lasted till night, and beginning early the 6th continued till 1 o'clock when at last we routed them. They were pursued about two miles, and so well dispersed that we have not seen one since; as we were excessively distressed by the total want of water, we marched immediately to the nearest spring without enquiring into the loss of the enemy, who must have suffered greatly by their repeated and bold attacks in which they were constantly repulsed. Our loss is very considerable. Of the 42d: Captain-Lieutenant Graham, Lieutenant McIntosh, Rangers Lieutenant Randall killed. 42d: Captain John Graham, Lieutenant Dun Campbell wounded. 77th: Lieutenant Donald Campbell. Volunteer People: killed, 50; wounded, 60; in all, 110." – Colonel Bouquet to Major Gladwin, August 28, 1763, Bouquet Papers.

3 Stephens.